

Questions for stakeholders on utility functions -

Response by: Brigid Ryan, Energy Specialist & Liaison, Rhode Island Housing

1) Which of the functions described here are integral to the future electric utility?

I question whether our model of requiring the Utility to administer most energy efficiency programs is the most appropriate and cost effective way to administer our programs.

I don't know if this has been looked at here but I do understand other states use different models. Is our current model the most cost effective approach?

2) Are there additional functions not described here that should be included as a strategic focus of the electric utility?

3) Are there functions described here that should be provided by an unregulated third party, or through a market-based approach?

4) To the extent certain activities now being performed by the utility may be performed by other market actors, what type of oversight should be in place to protect customer interests?

As we move more toward distributed generation, I think it is important the consumers are given choices in terms of the electricity supply origination. However, it seems that this area is less regulated (in terms of contracts and agreements between non-traditional suppliers and the customer) and opens the door to the possibility of bad deals for consumers. I think there needs to be a balance between choice and protection for the consumer, especially, LMI consumers.

5) Many of the functions described here require the utility to manage complex technology systems. What kind of regulatory approach could address the risk of technology obsolescence?

Is there a qualified 3rd party consultant/contractor that can evaluate this question? It seems to be a very technical issue.